Persons arrested under POTO

1817. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons arrested under the POTO throughout the country till date; and

(b) the details of action taken so far in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) The Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, 2001 (POTO) was promulgated on 24.10.2001 and re-promulgated as Prevention of Terrorism (Second) Ordinance, 2001 on 30.12.2001. This Ministry has advised all the State Governments/Union Territory administrations to take all necessary steps for implementing the provisions of POTO. Since Law and Order is a State subject, the information regarding number of persons arrested under the POTO throughout the country is not centrally maintained in this Ministry.

Additional provision in POTO

1818. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-items "POTO may get more teeth" appeared in The Hindustan Times dated the 15th February, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the Government have decided to make same additional provisions in the Prevention of Terrorism Bill to make the penalty clauses more stringent;

(c) the details of the provisions proposed to be made; and

(d) by when the new law is likely to be put in place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Providing basic amenities to undertrials

1819. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are approximately 2,60,000 prisoners in Indian Jails most of whom are not convicted;

(b) whether it is also a fact that three-fourth of the prisoners in the country are undertrials and 20 per cent of them have been languishing in jails for over a year;

(c) whether they are not being provided with proper sanitation, bedding and food; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to remove the overcrowding of jails and providing basic amenities to undertrials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) There were 2,04,480 under trail prisoners against the total number of 2,81,380 prisoners in jails in the country at the end of 1999. The number of under trial prisoners who were in jails for over a year at the aforesaid point of time was 36,634.

(c) and (d) Amenities like proper sanitation, bedding and food etc. are provided as per the provisions of the Jail Manuals of the State Governments.

In order to reduce the over crowding in jails, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India, on the administrative side, wrote a letter on the 29th November, 1999 to all the Chief Justices of the High Courts suggesting that every Chief Metropolitan Magistrate or the Chief Judicial Magistrate of the area, in which a District jail falls, may hold his Court once or twice in a month, in the jail to take up the cases of those under trial prisoners who are involved in petty offences.

The Government have also issued instructions to all the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to take necessary